



NEWSLETTER

SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF THE MILITARY



SECRETARY WHITLOCK HITS THE GROUND RUNNING!



SDDVA Secretary Whitlock hit the ground running this week. His first week on the job started with swearing in ceremonies and inaugural activities.

Tuesday he joined Governor Noem's cabinet team as the Governor presented her state-of-the-state address. His week continued with senior staff meetings, departmental budget meetings, Veterans Commission meeting and the SDDVA/Veterans Council Legislative Reception.

As the week drew to a close, Sec. Whitlock took time to visit with the SDPB team. You can listen hear to his interview on "In the Moment" with Lori Walsh—
<http://listen.sdpb.org/post/meeting-south-dakotas-new-secretary-veterans-affairs>.

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Veterans Commission with Sec. Whitlock (L to R: Commissioners Parr, Schild, Vosika and Russell).



OFFICIAL POEM FOR COMMISSIONING OF USS SOUTH DAKOTA

In anticipation of the commissioning of the USS South Dakota submarine on Feb. 2 in Groton, Connecticut, Former Governor Daugaard released a poem commissioned to honor the vessel and her crew. (Poem can be found on page 3).

The poem was written by Brian Hagg of Rapid City to commemorate the historic event. "My goal was to honor those who will serve on board the South Dakota. I also want to recognize the proud tradition of Naval service by men and women throughout our state's history and those that will soon take this great warship to sea" said Hagg.

The poem will be read by Mr. Hagg at the event and presented to the crew for display aboard the submarine. Few commissioned vessels have been so honored with an original composition.

The nation's newest attack submarine, USS South Dakota (SSN-790) will be commissioned in the time-honored tradition of the U.S. Navy by "bringing the ship to life" on Feb. 2. In attendance will be past and present state and federal elected officials as well as representatives of Native American tribes, veterans and dignitaries. The USS South Dakota is expected to serve our nation for over 30 years.

For more information on the poem or the ship's commissioning visit SSN790.ORG or contact Ron Hill at 605-381-0258 or ches242001@aol.com.

BULTJE TO SERVE AS PANELIST ON "MAKING A LIVING" PROGRAM

SDDVA's Erin Bultje will be serving as a panelist on the upcoming SDPB's "Making a Living" program on Tuesday, January 29, at 4:30 pm.

Panelists include - Jay Leichtenberg, South Dakota Department of Labor & Regulation; Erin Bultje, South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs; and Kareen Dougherty, Sioux Falls Procurement Technical Assistance Center. Jackelyn Severin of SDPB will serve as the host for the panel.

Panelists will be discussing programs for veterans who want to start a business and employment programs for veterans, as well as the benefits of supporting veteran owned businesses in the community and the benefits of hiring veterans.

<http://www.sdpb.org/blogs/press-releases/2019/01/03/making-a-living-military-veterans-start-up-opportunities-job-programs/>

On the Occasion of the Commissioning of the
USS South Dakota (SSN 790)
A Poetic Tribute

Amended draft
November 28, 2018

God speed, great warship of the deep,
entrusted by our Motherland
to protect its shores
while our children sleep.
For the odyssey ahead will
demand much from commander and crew,
gallant sailors chosen from the special few.
May you be inspired by those
who fought so honorably before
aboard the USS South Dakota,
feared Battleship X,
decorated for its heroic engagements
during the Second World War.

God speed, valiant sentry of the deep,
commissioned to protect our homeland
while our children sleep.
To your namesake's legacy
may you always be true,
with stealth and tenacity
bravely perform the missions
commanded of you.
Forthwith let the annals of naval history
chronicle your service with distinction,
for you must know, SSN 790,
that you have the trust of a grateful nation.

God speed, mighty vessel of the deep,
vanquish, if necessary,
dark forces that threaten America
while our children sleep.
From the Great State of South Dakota,
home of Mt. Rushmore,
with its iconic symbols of liberty
chiseled in stone,
accept this prayerful declaration.
If, in the service of our country,
perils of war put you in harm's way,
may you be inspired by Crazy Horse,
who fought bravely,
impervious to enemy fire,
and, guided by the spirit of Black Elk,
forget not that for which you stand,
rock solid in the service of our nation,
knowing you are in the thoughts and prayers
of a free homeland.

Brian D. Hagg
U.S. Army 1969 - 1982
Rapid City, South Dakota

SRST HOSTS TWO STAND DOWNS



VSOs Christen Schneider (Corson Co.) and David Harrison (Standing Rock Sioux Tribe VSO)

Standing Rock Sioux Tribal Veterans Service Officers hosted stand downs in Ft Yates and McLaughlin recently. During the stand down, TVSO Manaja Hill recognized a World War II Veteran and presented his family with a certificate of appreciation.

SDDVA's Kevin Swanson hosted a booth at both stand downs. Corson County VSO Christen Schneider was also able to join the troops at the stand down.



Manaja Hill (Standing Rock Sioux Tribal VSO) presents certificate to nephew of WWII Veteran.

 The advertisement features a large "Memorial DAY" sign in the center. To the left is a bright blue classic car with its hood open. To the right is a yellow classic car. In the foreground, there is a red motorcycle. At the bottom right, there is a red classic car. The background is a collage of American flags and patriotic imagery.

Car Show 11:30 AM – 3:00 PM May 27, 2019 (Show and Shine Only) At the Michael J. Fitzmaurice South Dakota Veterans Home. No Judging or Classes, but the First 50 receive a Dash Plaque.

Free BBQ!!!

Come with your Hot Rod, Custom Car, Favorite Car, or Motorcycle!

HOT RODS, CUSTOM CARS & MOTORCYCLES!

SDNG HELICOPTER CREW DEPARTS FOR SOUTHWEST BORDER

A South Dakota Army National Guard UH-72 Lakota helicopter and crew departed for Arizona this week to provide aerial detection and monitoring for U.S. Customs and Border Protection along the Southwest border.

The soldiers will work with the Arizona National Guard, in coordination with U.S. Customs and Border Protection personnel, to bring additional air reconnaissance capability and capacity to enhance CBP's border security operations.

The four-person crew of pilots and an analyst is expected to support the mission for up to 90 days.

The request to provide aviation reconnaissance support came to the SDNG from the National Guard Bureau and approved by Gov. Kristi Noem. Multiple states are providing similar capabilities to the Texas, Arizona and New Mexico National Guard.



This is the fourth time the SDNG has sent aircraft and crews for Southwest border support, previously deploying in 2007, 2013 and 2015.

The SDNG also assisted in Southwest border operations with Operation Jump Start in 2006 and 2007, where it provided engineer and project management support in the construction of barriers and access roads along the U.S.-Mexico border. In all, about 570 Soldiers and Airmen from more than a dozen units participated in various missions.

1ST ID COMMANDER PREPS 196TH MEB FOR UPCOMING TRAINING

The commanding general for the U.S. Army's 1st Infantry Division, Maj. Gen. John S. Kolasheski, visited the 196th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade in Sioux Falls, Jan. 5, as part of preparation for an upcoming multinational training mission this spring.

The 196th MEB is set to support the 1st ID at Warfighter 19-4, a joint training exercise slated for March 31 to April 15, in Fort Riley, Kansas. The exercise will test multiple organizations' abilities to effectively and collaboratively function in a simulated wartime scenario.

"We need to be prepared to deploy, fight and win in a multinational environment in support of national military objectives," Kolasheski said. "We need to look at how we can optimally integrate together to be successful."

The visit marked the first time a U.S. Army division commander has come to South Dakota to visit the 196th.

"I'm really honored to be here, to spend some time laying the foundation for how we plan to approach the warfighter," Kolasheski said. "This maneuver enhancement brigade has a long history, and how we organize and integrate elements like this brigade is critically important. We can't do this alone."

The mission of the 196th MEB is to enable, enhance and protect operational and tactical freedom of action for a supported maneuver force, such as armor, striker or infantry units. With about 190 Soldiers in its ranks, the unit commands and controls the forces necessary to conduct security and functional operations in a designated area on the battlefield.

The warfighter exercise presents a unique opportunity for the 196th. More complex than a typical two-week annual training, a warfighter enables the unit to train side-by-side with a division-sized force.

Working within that larger context means the 196th will have the chance to iron out its role in a true-to-life wartime scenario.

"A warfighter is an opportunity for a division commander to train his staff, as well as brigade staff, on operations that are hard to replicate at a training center," said Maj. Jason Thomson, executive officer with the 196th. "It forces division and brigade staffs to work out field problems that enhance their knowledge base."

It also gives the two units the chance to develop a working rapport, which will help increase the efficiency and effectiveness of both units in training and mission readiness.



STATE OF VA Community Town Hall



**The Honorable
Robert Wilkie
Secretary of
Veterans Affairs**

**JANUARY 17TH, 2019
1:00PM – 3:00PM ET**

Watch Live and Register

<https://www.webcaster4.com/Webcast/Page/89/28837>

VA HEALTH CARE

Dr. Richard Stone – VHA Health
Dr. Kameron Matthews – Community Care
Dr. Keita Franklin – Suicide Prevention

BENEFITS

Dr. Paul Lawrence – VBA Benefits
Randy Reeves – NCA Cemetery
Chairman, Cheryl Mason – Appeals

Keynote Address following SECVA Wilkie
Dr. Lynda Davis, VA Veterans Experience Office



www.facebook.com/VeteransAffairs



www.youtube.com/DeptVetAffairs

UPCOMING EVENTS

Jan 13-18—VFW Accredited Service Officer Training—Annapolis, MD
Jan 18—Sioux Falls Military Appreciation Resource Fair—Central Church (Ralph Rogers Road) 10:00 am—9:00 pm (CT)
Jan 20—VFW Baseball Annual Meeting—Madison VFW Post Home—10:00 am (CT)
Jan 21—State Offices Closed—Martin Luther King Day
Jan 22—VABHHCS Whole Health Program—Hot Springs Building 12—Room A002—10:00 am—12:00 pm (MT)
Jan 28-29—VFW State Legislative Conference—Pierre
Jan 31—Veterans Town Hall—DAV Headquarters—Sioux Falls (1519 W. 51st Street) 6:00 pm (CT)
Feb 2—USS South Dakota Commissioning
Feb 6—American Legion Legislative Reception—Post 8—Pierre—5:00 to 8:00 pm (CT)
Feb 8-10—American Legion Mid Winter Conference—Holiday Inn—Spearfish
Feb 12—VABHHCS Whole Health Program—Ft Meade Building 145—Room 239—1:00 pm—3:00 pm (MT)
Feb 18—State Offices Closed—President's Day
Feb 21—Drop In Legal Services—American Legion Post 17—Watertown (10:00 am—2:00 pm (CT)
Feb 22—Drop in Legal Services—DAV (1519 W. 51st Street)—Sioux Falls (9:00 am—4:00 pm) (CT)
Feb 26—VABHHCS Whole Health Program—Hot Springs Building 12—Room A002—10:00 am—12:00 pm (MT)
Mar 3-7—VFW Legislative Conference—Washington, DC
Mar 12—VABHHCS Whole Health Program—Ft Meade Building 145—Room 239—1:00 pm—3:00 pm (MT)
Mar 26—VABHHCS Whole Health Program—Hot Springs Building 12—Room A002—10:00 am—12:00 pm (MT)
May 7-9 SDDVA Mini Conferences (Rapid City, Pierre and Sioux Falls)
May 17-19—DAV Convention—Hilton Garden Inn (5300 S. Grand Circle) —Sioux Falls
July 20-24—National VFW Convention—Orlando, FL
Aug 26-29—SDDVA Benefit School



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